



**Workshop Part B: February 2 , 2023**  
Grand County Library, Moab  
Access and Artifact Handling

# Collections Labeling Kit

## **Acetone in dropper bottle (Fisher Scientific)**

- Used for removing B-72. Fumes may be irritating. Flammable.
- Reagent Grade, NOT the acetone you can purchase at a hardware store.

## **Funnel, mini (Amazon.com)**

- For transfer of adhesive into smaller brush bottle, like polish bottle.

## **Needles, assorted (Local fabric store)**

- Sharps are good for piercing Tyvek label.
- Blunts or ball points are good for getting in between the weave gently.

## **Paraloid B-72 adhesive (pre-mixed for labeling from Talas)**

- Use to apply paper labels.
- Works best no thicker than maple syrup most of the time. Even thinner is often fine.
- If it bubbles, try adding more acetone to your jar of adhesive.
- B-67 is similar to B-72 but in mineral spirits instead of acetone. This is sometimes used as a top coat.
- B-72 is thermoplastic, so if the lid sticks, running under hot water or using a hairdryer can help get it unstuck.
- When B-72 dries on tools or jars, it can be soaked in water overnight, and then peeled off.

## **Pen, Zig Millenium (MarkerSupply.com)**

- “Permanent” boasted by many pens often just means waterproof, not lightfast or non-bleeding.
- Dye-based inks often smear.
- Carbon black ink is lightfast: India ink or rapidograph ink.
- IdentiPen also recommended for writing on plastic bags.

## **#2 Pencil (Local office supply store)**

- HB pencils are also OK.

## **Polish bottle with brush lid for B-72 (Amazon.com)**

- DO NOT USE: Nail polish, correction fluid, or WiteOut
- Nice to buy B-72 already made, but the wide lid container causes it to dry out too fast.
- Use mini-funnel to transfer from bigger container into polish bottle. Also, if one jar dries out you have a back-up.
- When applying, think of a sandwich made by two layers of B-72 with label in the middle.

## **Small or sewing scissors (Fisher Scientific, McMaster Carr)**

- Cut your labels into fringe for ease of handling multiple small numbers.
- Rounding the corners makes labels less likely to snag and pop off.

### **Small paper tags (Amazon.com)**

- Don't use colored string. Sometimes it runs or bleeds. Replace with white, cotton string.
- Avoid tags with wire, or metal grommets around holes, risks of scratching and rust stains.
- You might want to use artifact tags from archival supply companies. More expensive than the Avery brand office-supply variety, which test slightly more alkaline than the expensive ones.

### **Thread, white cotton (Local fabric store)**

- Rule of thumb, tie material should be softer than the object, so abrasion will damage the tie and not the artifact. Cotton is non-abrasive. Polyester is a little bit abrasive.
- "Glide" or other brands of Teflon dental floss OK. Plumber's Teflon tape is OK.
- Regular dental floss not so good. Usually made of nylon and becomes brittle.
- Plastic zip ties usually too rough, and are also usually nylon and degrade, get brittle, break.
- PVC plastic degrades and releases acids.

### **Tweezers (McMaster Carr)**

- Pointy ones are helpful for manipulating paper labels.

### **Tyvek, for labeling textiles (Local office supply store)**

- Tyvek is spun-bonded from olefin fibers, an inert plastic.
- Mailing envelopes and home wrap are usually Tyvek and it is OK to use the non-printed, bare areas.
- Needle punch "soft" Tyvek and smooth "hard" Tyvek both OK.
- Alternatives: twill tape, Reemay. Twill tape sometimes hard to write on without ink bleeding.

### **White vinyl eraser (Local art supply store)**

- For removing pencil marks.
- Can be helpful for removing tape residues from price tags or stickers as well.

## **REFERENCES**

Alten, Helen "Numbering Museum Collections: Labeling Ethnographic Objects." ICOM Ethnographic Conservation Newsletter Number 17, April 1988 pp.18-21.

<http://www.collectioncare.org/cci/ccin.html>

Braun, Thomas J. "An Alternative Technique for Applying Accession Numbers to Museum Artifacts." Journal of the American Institute for Conservation Vol 46. Summer 2007. Pp 91-104.

[http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/conservation/docs\\_pdfs/ApplyAccessionnos.pdf](http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/conservation/docs_pdfs/ApplyAccessionnos.pdf)

Buck, Rebecca A. and Jean Allman Gilmore. MRM5 Museum Registration Methods 5th Edition. AAM Press. American Association of Museums. Washington DC. 2010

Davidson, Amy, Samantha Alderson and Marilyn Fox. "Assembling an Archival Marking Kit for Paleontological Specimens." 2006 (and more too!)

<http://collections.paleo.amnh.org/34/labeling>



**Workshop Part B: February 3, 2022**  
Alf Engen Ski Museum, Park City  
Access and Artifact Handling

# 3D Objects

Ceramic (glazed and unglazed), Wood, Glass

## OVERVIEW - BARRIER COAT WITH INK MARKING

The method recommended for most 3D objects is a barrier coat with ink or paint marking.

### MATERIALS

- Acryloid B72 in acetone
- Pigma pen
- Clean dusting brush or cloth

### METHOD

1. Examine the object, determining what materials the object is made of, and identify a suitable location for marking;
  - a. Choose a location that is not obtrusive while the object is on display, but can be easily accessed and is visible while the object is stored.
  - b. Do not obscure maker's marks, major design elements, or old inventory numbers.
  - c. Do not choose a surface that is physically unstable.
2. Make sure the selected location is free from dust and surface dirt;
  - a. A light dusting with a soft, clean brush or a clean, lint-free cloth should be sufficient.
  - b. Do not use any kind of solvent, including water, on a museum object before consulting a conservator.
3. Apply a base coat of clear varnish (Acryloid B72 in acetone) in a neat rectangle just large enough for you to write the accession number;
  - a. Allow varnish to dry 5-10 minutes, until it is no longer tacky
4. Write the number on the base coat using a Pigma pen;
  - a. Use a white or black ink depending on what will be visible on the object.
  - b. Allow number to dry 5-10 minutes.
5. Apply a topcoat of varnish over the number;
  - a. Allow varnish to dry for at least 30 minutes before returning to storage location.

## OVERVIEW - PRINTED PAPER LABELS ADHERED WITH ACRYLIC

Another recommended method for marking most 3D objects is with printed paper labels adhered with acrylic.

### MATERIALS

- Acryloid B72 in acetone
- Scissors
- Printer paper label
- Clean dusting brush or cloth

### METHOD

1. Examine the object, determining what materials the object is made of, and identify a suitable location for marking;
  - a. Choose a location that is not obtrusive while the object is on display, but can be easily accessed and is visible while the object is stored.
  - b. Do not obscure maker's marks, major design elements, or old inventory numbers.
  - c. Do not choose a surface that is physically unstable.
2. Make sure the selected location is free from dust and surface dirt;
  - a. A light dusting with a soft, clean brush or a clean, lint-free cloth should be sufficient.
  - b. Do not use any kind of solvent, including water, on a museum object before consulting a conservator.
3. Apply a base coat of clear varnish (Acryloid B72 in acetone) in a neat rectangle just large enough for you to place the printed label over;
  - a. Allow varnish to dry 5-10 minutes, until it is no longer tacky
4. Cut printed label to correct size, and place label over the basecoat;
  - a. Allow label to dry 5-10 minutes.
5. Apply a topcoat of varnish over the label;
  - a. Allow varnish to dry for at least 30 minutes before returning to storage location.



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# Textiles

Textiles (clothing, quilts, rugs, etc.), some basketry, some leather objects

## OVERVIEW

The method recommended for most textile objects is handwritten labels on cotton tape sewn onto the object.

## MATERIALS

- Pigma pen
- Scissors
- Unbleached cotton (twill) tape
- Natural color cotton thread
- Needle, size 7 or 8 for most things
- Clothes iron

## METHOD

1. Examine the object, determining what materials the object is made of, and identify a suitable location for marking;
  - a. Choose a location that is not obtrusive while the object is on display, but can be easily accessed and is visible while the object is stored.
  - b. Do not obscure maker's marks, major design elements, or old inventory numbers.
2. Cut a piece of twill tape to your desired length and write the number on it;
  - a. Use a piece of tape just large enough for you to write the accession number, leaving about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch on each side of the number for sewing it on.
3. Iron the label to set the ink;
4. Turn under the cut ends of the label. Sew the label in place using size 7 or 8 needle and thread;
  - a. Take care to sew between the threads of the textile (object) and not through the textile weave



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# Works on Paper

## Paper and photographic materials

### OVERVIEW

The museum labeling and marking method recommended for most works on paper or photographic materials is pencil.

### MATERIALS

- Medium lead or graphite pencil - #2, HB, F, or H grade

### METHOD

1. Examine the object, determining what materials the object is made of, and identify a suitable location for marking;
  - a. Works of art on paper are usually marked on the reverse side behind a non-image area at the lower margin
  - b. Do not obscure maker's marks, major design elements, or old inventory numbers.
  - c. If the object is mounted or hinged, mark the number with pencil on the back of the mount.
2. Select an appropriate pencil;
  - a. Choose a medium lead pencil, #2, HB, F, and H grades are recommended. A blunt pencil is recommended for this activity to prevent creating impressions/lines in the paper.
3. Place the object on a firm surface and write the number gently, avoiding indenting.